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CHAPTER XIX

HAND-CART EMIGRANTS, 1856

The Deseret News, October 1, 1856

THE FIRST HAND-CART COMPANIES.

Having learned that Capt. Edmund Ellsworth's company camped at the Willow Springs on the evening of the 25th inst., on the 26th Presidents Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, Lieut. Genl. D. H. Wells, and many other citizens, in carriages, and several gentlemen and ladies on horseback, with a part of Capt. H. B. Clawson's company of Lancers and the Brass Bands under Capt. William Pitt, left the Governor's Office at 9 a. m., with the view of meeting and escorting them into the city.

Within about a mile and a half of the foot of the Little Mountain, Prest. Young ordered the party to halt until the hand carts should arrive, and with Prest. Kimball drove on to meet them. Ere long the anxiously expected train came in sight, led by Capt. Ellsworth on foot, and with two aged veterans pulling the front cart, followed by a long line of carts attended by the old, middle aged and young of both sexes.

When opposite the escorting party, a halt was called and their Captain introduced the new comers to Prests. Young and Kimball, which was followed by the joyous greeting of relatives and friends, and an unexpected treat of melons. While thus regaling, Capt. Daniel D. McArthur came up with his hand-cart company, they having traveled from the east base of the Big Mountain.

From the halt to the Public Square on 2nd West Temple street, the following order was observed, under the supervision of Capt. Clawson:—Lancers; Ladies on horseback; Prest. Young's, Prest. Kimball's and Lieut. Genl. Well's carriages; the Bands; Capts. Ellsworth's and McArthur's companies; Citizens in carriages and on horseback. The line of march was scarcely taken up, before it began to be met by men, women and children on foot, on horses, and in wagons, thronging out to see and welcome the first hand-cart companies; and the numbers rapidly increased until the living tide lined and thronged South Temple street.

The procession reached the Public Square about sunset, where the Lancers, Bands and

carriages were formed in a line facing the line of hand carts; and after a few remarks by Prest. Young, accompanied by his blessing, the spectators and escort retired and the companies pitched their tents, at the end of a walk and pull upwards of 1300 miles.

This journey has been performed with less than the average amount of mortality usually attending ox trains; and all, though somewhat fatigued, stepped out with alacrity to the last, and appeared buoyant and cheerful. They had often traveled 25 and 30 miles in a day, and would have come through in a much shorter time, had they not been obliged to wait upon the slow motion of the oxen attached to the few wagons containing the tents and groceries.

Much credit is due to Capt. Ellsworth for having walked the entire distance, thus cheering and encouraging his company by example as well as precept, and the saints with their hand carts, aided by Capts. Ellsworth and McArthur and their Assistants, Elders Oakley, Butler, Crandal and Leonard, and guided and sustained by the Almighty, have preached to the ungodly a sermon louder than the voice of many thunders. And thus has been successfully accomplished a plan, devised by the wisdom and forethought of our President, for rapidly gathering the poor, almost entirely independent of the wealth so closely hoarded beyond their reach.

Herein is exhibited a portion of the "faith and patience of the Saints," but will the world heed the lesson? Only the wise, for the wicked will pass on and be punished.

The Deseret News, October 8, 1856

ACCOUNT OF HIS MISSION,

By Elder Edmund Ellsworth, and his Experience in Leading the First Hand-Cart Company from Iowa City to Great Salt Lake City, Bowery, Sept. 28, 1856.

(Reported by G. D. Watt.)

Soon after, a letter came from Prest. Brigham Young, wishing the hand-cart enterprise to commence this season. My heart was in the enterprise, and I showed the Saints that

if it was a hard journey, they were called upon to pass through; and even should they lay down their bodies in the earth before they arrived in Great Salt Lake City, it was better to do so, keeping the commandment of God in gathering, than to wear out their bodies in the old countries; and so the Saints in that country feel now. . . .

With this kind of a company we came from England to Iowa City, probably a distance from this place of 1300 miles, or upwards. There was our first place of out-fit for the plains; and there I again received my appointment to lead the first company of hand-carts across the plains.

Again, had the making of our hand-carts been directed by the wisdom of our President here, or could the work there have been superintended by men of more experience, with time to have attended strictly to seeing that the carts were made in the best proportions and of good, substantial timber, much labor on the plains might have been avoided; in fact I presume that one third the labor we have had could have been thus saved. Our hand-carts were of a poor description, but they had to be experimented upon, and the experiment made this season has been at our expense. . . .

I regret that there was a wagon in our company, for I realized that wagons had a tendency to destroy the faith of our brethren and sisters; for if they were sick a little they felt that they could get into the wagons.

I am persuaded that if there had been no wagons for such people, there would have been none sick, or weak, but that their faith would have been strong in the name of the Lord. (Voice, that is true.) Consequently I have had to labor with the people incessantly to keep faith in them, to keep them away from the wagons, by showing them that there was honor attached to pulling hand-carts into the valley; by saying, I have walked 1300 miles, old and decrepid as I am, with these crooked legs of mine, and there is honor in that, brethren and sisters, far more than in having to be carried in a wagon to the valleys of the mountains, and thus I believe that I have stimulated those that otherwise would have gone into the wagons. . . .

When we came to the large streams that had to be crossed, such as the Platte, it seemed almost too much for human nature, for men, women, and children to wade through a broad stream nearly two feet deep, and some would tremble at it; but the most, as they were requested, boldly entered and went through freely, not caring for the poor gentile sneaks who were watching them on the banks.

The brethren and sisters felt wonderfully tender of the children, on the commencement of the journey, asking, "What shall we do with them?" and saying that they must get into the wagons. I said let them stick by the hand-carts, and pull off their heavy shoes

so that they can go along light footed, and the journey will be accomplished easily by them; their feet will become tough, and the mothers who will take this course will see the utility of it before the journey is accomplished; but some were so tender of their children that they nearly killed them by keeping on their heavy stockings and shoes.

Their feet became blistered, and they were soon so crippled as not to be able to walk, only with great pain, and when they could not use their shoes any longer they had to take them off, and then their little feet were tender and sore, and altogether unfit to tread on the pebbles and prickly pears scattered on the roads in the latter portion of our journey. If they had been permitted to go barefooted at first, their feet would have been hardened and inured to the journey, and been better prepared for the rough roads in the mountains.

The remarks of Prest. Young, concerning our teams having been a hinderment to us, are verily true; and I believe his suggestions were, at first, to provide a few mule teams to travel in company with the hand-carts for hospital purposes, and also to carry some of the baggage. Had the brethren in the States been able to have accomplished this, I believe that the companies of hand-carts already arrived would have been in some ten or twelve days sooner.

Some of the brethren wrote letters to their wives, immediately after starting in the hand-cart train, but I believe they have all had to bring their letters in their pockets; we have passed the ox teams, and everything that started with us. An ox train started ten days before us and anticipated making as speedy a passage as any such company could do, but we passed it, and it is still back.

Our ox teams started with us in the morning, but they would be from one to three hours behind us in getting into camp at night, besides what we waited for them through the day; and we have generally waited from one to three hours in the middle of the day. . . .

The Deseret News, October 8, 1856

THE FIRST DESERET STATE FAIR

Was held in this city on the 2nd, 3d and 4th inst., and was highly creditable to the skill and industry of our infant settlements.

The articles on exhibition filled most of the spacious rooms in the building known as the Deseret Store. In the basement were large squashes, beets, and carrots; various samples of wheat, corn, flour, garden seeds, &c.; garden implements, large hens from Land's End, England, &c.

On the first floor was a beautiful carding machine, made at the Public Works for Gov. Young; a very handsome bridle, saddle, and buckskin suit made for Mr. Howard Livingston, and since taken by him to the States; cut-